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AUTHOR Menard, Ralph E.
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ABSTRACT

The implications of faculty workload and formula budgeting issues on higher education in the 1980s are discussed. Because of declining enrollments and tight resources it is suggested that state legislative committees in the 1980s will accelerate their requests for faculty workload data related to formulas for the allocations of full-time faculty. Executive Officers of state commissions or state boards of higher education in the United States were surveyed to determine the effect of faculty workloads on appropriations. In more than one-half of the responding states, the survey indicated that faculty workloads would affect appropriations. Impacts of this concern over faculty workloads include: increased state encroachments in academic decisionmaking, reduction of the quantity and quality of research, more state control over what is taught because of the emphasis on student credit-hour production, and an increased unionization of faculties. It is suggested that these impacts could prompt institutions to develop faculty workload formulas as a protection against the use of inadequate workload measures by state committees. (Author/SF)

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Mary Corcoran
University of Minnesota
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THE IMPACTS OF THE FACULTY WORKLOAD EMPHASIS ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE 1980S

Ralph E. Henard

Director of Academic Planning

The University of Colorado at Denver

1100 Fourteenth Street

Denver, Colorado 80202

(303) 629-2551
(303) 494-7979

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the implications of faculty workload and formula budgeting issues. Because of declining enrollments and tight resources, state legislative committees in the 1980s will likely accelerate their resuests for faculty workload data related to formulas for the allocations of FTE faculty. Some of the impacts can be increased state encroachments in academic decision making, more stringent accountability for the use of faculty, increased faculty workload and the reduction of the quantity and quality of research, more state control over what is taught because of the emphasis on student credit hour production, and the increased unionization of faculties. These impacts have implications for institutional researchers and planners - skills in playing "the numbers game" with state committees and communicating the skills to deans and department heads.

In recent years state legislatures have recurrently raised the issue of faculty workload (FWL) as they have viewed the costs of higher education and attempted to measure the performance of postsecondary educational institutions. The issue has been related to budget formulas, performance budgeting and audits, and to program evaluations.

This paper examines evidence regarding the likelihood that FWL will be an issue in the 1980s and the possible impacts on postsecondary education.

Will Faculty Workload Be An Issue in the 1980s?

In searching for an answer to this question, a survey questionnaire was sent (January, 1979) to the Executive Officers of state commissions or state boards of higher education in the United States, including Washington, D.C. Forty-nine of the states are represented by the responses. Table one shows the questions used in the survey and the responses to each item.

Forty-four of the respondents believe that faculty workload will be an issue raised by state legislative or executive committees in the 1980s. Thirty-seven believe that the issue of FWL will be related to state appropriations for FTE faculty, while four believe the issue will be raised but not related to appropriations, and three are uncertain. Four respondents do not expect that the faculty workload issue will be raised by state legislative or executive committees, however two of these states currently have formulas for FTE faculty appropriations. One did not respond to the question.

Twenty of the respondents state that their legislature uses a formula that includes faculty workload as a factor in the appropriations of FTE faculty. In an additional seven states FWL is considered in making appropriations although there is no specified formula. Thus in more than one-half the responding states, faculty workloads affect appropriations.

Table 1

The Results of a Survey of Executives of State Commissions - Boards of Higher Education in the United States

N = 49

Survey Questions	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
1. Are postsecondary institutions in your state required to report faculty workload statistics to state legislative or executive committees, commissions, or agencies?	19	39	30[1]	61
2. If the answer to question no. 1 is "no", has there been discussion about such a requirement?	16	53	14	47
3. In state appropriations to postsecondary educational institutions, or in allocations of FTE faculty, is faculty workload a consideration? (one "no response" - 2%)	27	55	21[2]	43
4. In Colorado, a formula consisting of student-faculty ratios by level within Hegis Code is used, in relation to an institution's projections of FTE students by level within Hegis Code, for the appropriation of numbers of FTE faculty to an institution. Does your state have a formula for FTE faculty appropriation?	20	41	29	59
5. Do you believe faculty workload will be an issue raised by state legislative or executive committees in the 1980s? If so, will the issue be related to budget appropriations-allocations of FTE faculty?				
1. Yes, I believe the faculty workload issue will be raised.	44	90		
A. It will be related to appropriations-allocations of faculty.	37	76		
B. It will not be related to appropriations-allocations of faculty.	4	8		
2. No, I believe the issue will not be raised. (one "no response" = 2%)			4	8

1. Six states responded with "no" to the question. However, they have reported faculty workload (FWL) data upon requests.

2. Two states responded with "no", but FWL is considered indirectly in appropriations based on cost per student credit hour.

Of the thirty states where there is no requirement to report faculty workloads to state committees, more than one-half have discussed taking this action.

The results of the survey clearly indicate a great probability that faculty workload will be an issue for postsecondary education in the 1980s. The predominant view of those close to action and trends at the state level is that faculty workloads will be related to appropriations of FTE faculty, as is presently the case in more than one-half of the reporting states.

Will the views of the Executive Officers of state commissions or state boards be predictive--will faculty workload actually be a major issue in the 1980s? There are several factors that may well converge to turn these beliefs into realities.

Converging Factors That Make the Workload Issue Imminent

One of these factors is that faculty costs and related faculty workloads are prime targets in the drive for cost containment of higher education. It is not surprising that the survey revealed that over one-half of the states reported either a budget formula which includes FWL or a consideration of FWL in making appropriations. Since faculty salaries are one of the major costs in education, if the workload can be increased and the numbers of faculty decreased, there is an easy and quick way to cut costs.

There is a great probability that this method of cost containment will be used more in the future. Until recently, increasing student enrollments made it difficult for legislatures to make a case for its use. However, as enrollments decline through the early 1980s, it is likely that more attention will be focused on faculty loads. This is illustrated by what occurred in Colorado in the spring of 1979. The Governor's State of the State message projected a 10,000 enrollment decline by 1983. Though the projection is not

shared by everyone (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1978), enrollments have already declined in some institutions. However, two of the major universities have caps and the student demand exceeds the caps. Taking a cue from the Governor and perhaps from other sources, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), composed of state senators and representatives from both parties, in its 1979-80 fiscal year appropriations proposals, cut 402 faculty and 5146 FTE students from the current level of appropriations. This represented a reduction for the state of 6.9 percent of total FTE faculty and 4.4 percent of total FTE students (FTES) enrollment. The estimated FTES enrollment for the fiscal year 1978-79 was 2671 (2.3 percent) below the FY 1978-79 appropriations. The cuts were across the board for almost all institutions. One justification for the FTE student cuts was that if caps were lowered at the major universities students would go to institutions where enrollment has declined. A second justification was faculty productivity. The JBC had requested each college and university that receives appropriations to survey faculty members in the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent of the salary scale of their institution. The purpose was to discover the number of contact hours these faculty members spent with students during a representative week.

When the data were collected the JBC placed like institutions together (Research Universities, Community Colleges, etc.) and computed median contact hours for each group. Faculty cuts were based on how far below the median an institution fell. An interesting sequel to this action is that there has been widespread public support for the institutions and consequently the action was drastically modified. Even so, this is a likely forewarning of what might be coming.

A second factor that makes the workload issue imminent is the lack of

understanding about faculty workloads among legislators and the general public. This action of the Joint Budget Committee of the Colorado General Assembly expressed an attitude that faculty members don't spend enough time with students. The attitude has historical roots. In the 1960s, during the period of student activism, there was widespread criticism of the amount of time faculty members spent in consulting and working on research grants. The view was that faculties were too busy for students. Consequently, some states attempted to force faculty members to spend more time in instruction. Lelong (1974) reported that four states had adopted legislation that specified teaching loads. In commenting on this legislation, he said that the implication is that faculty members should do more teaching; there is a widespread belief that they have a soft life, they work only nine months a year.. ..are in the classroom only a few hours per week.

Lelong (1974, p.14) defended the workload of faculty members, stating that:

> ....there is overwhelming evidence that professors work equally long or longer hours than their professional colleagues in commerce or industry. It is true that much of the evidence comes from reports of faculty members themselves and therefore has been criticized as biased. Nevertheless it comes with remarkable consistency from thousands upon thousands in U.S. institutions as well as from their British and Canadian colleagues, and some such surveys have been corroborated by more objective time studies. ....Most such reports reveal that faculty members average some 50+ hours per week and spend approximately 30 of those hours on tasks directly related to the instruction of classes.

It is likely that in the 1980s faculty workloads will need this kind of

defense and they will need close examination by institutions because they are one strand in the net that will be used to contain educational costs.

Performance budgeting, performance audits, and program evaluations are integrally related to faculty workload as an input measure, consequently they are additional factors that make the workload issue imminent.

Performance budgeting makes institutions accountable by appropriating on the basis of past results (outcomes) or future performance expectations. Inputs (resources) are measured in relationship to outputs. Performance measures may be previously formulated goals or objectives, or performance may be measured by cost-effectiveness by comparing the inputs (resources)-outputs (outcomes) between institutions.

Peterson, Erwin and Wilson (1977) conducted a telephone survey (Spring 1976) of higher education executive officers in the fifty states. They reported that seventeen states had attempted performance budgeting in varying degrees. Case histories of Hawaii and Washington were presented. The focus for the Washington study centered on the community college Workload Standards Study.

Folger (1977) points out that performance audits can be similar to program evaluation or review. However, the performance audit is more global in that it is an assessment of the effectiveness of the total organization in reaching its objectives or goals.

Berdahl (1977, p.36) provides an historical perspective on the relationship between post audits and legislative or executive program evaluations. He reports that by 1975 thirty-six states had given the post audit function to the legislature. Previously, in nearly all states, post audits were performed by a popularly elected independent state auditor or by the executive branch. The audits usually "....concerned fiscal management

analyses of legality and efficiency." However, in the 1960s there were largely unsuccessful attampts to obtain adoption of PPBS (planning, programming, budget systems) in the state budgeting process. The result was "...a recognition of the importance of program evaluation, which then got picked up by the post-audit movement."

Berdahl reports case histories of legislative program evaluations in Wisconsin and Virginia, two of at least seven states where intensive program evaluations have occurred. In both of these case histories, involving the University of Wisconsin System and Virginia Community College System, faculty workload or faculty productivity became issues and points of contention. The Regents of the University of Wisconsin System challenged the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) on its invasion of academic freedom and succeeded in obtaining an ammendment to the budget bill that limited LAB powers.

The faculty workload issue is interwoven with performance budgeting, performance audits, and program evaluations or reviews. It is likely that in the 1980s these factors will converge along with FWL formulas (a possible result of a lack of understanding about workloads) to form a fabric for the containment of higher education costs.

Impacts of the Workload Issue on Postsecondary Education in the 1980s

One of the impacts of the faculty workload issue may be increased state encroachments on academic freedom. The determination of faculty workloads by educational institutions is crucial to academic freedom. The use of faculty resources, along with what shall be taught and how it shall be taught, are decision-making areas that gauge the extent to which there is academic freedom.

It now seems very likely that one of the major issues for the 1980s will

be further encroachments of legislatures and governors into academic decision-making. Events may unfold in this manner. The energy crisis and other factors will fuel inflation, thereby increasing the costs of state agencies. This will be accompanied by greater competition for state appropriations. Decreasing enrollments in colleges and universities will make them prime targets for retrenchments. Legislatures and governors will strive to make higher educational institutions more accountable by attempts to measure efficiency, effectiveness, or productivity. Faculty workloads may be one measure used because they are related to the "delivery system" for education.

The issues involved in these struggles may well have been identified by an action described in the Wisconsin case study (Berdahl 1977, p. 45):

> The major new element to emerge afterward was the addition through other legislative channels of the following amendments to LAB (Legislative Audit Bureau) powers incorporated in the budget bill: "In performing post-audits under this subsection, the Legislative Audit Bureau shall not examine issues related to academic freedom within the University of Wisconsin System. A post-audit shall not examine into or comment upon the content of the various academic programs, including degree requirements, major, curriculum, or courses within the University of Wisconsin System, nor shall any such post-audit examine into the manner in which individual faculty members or groups of faculty members conduct their instructional, research, or public service activities. This subsection does not preclude the bureau from reviewing the procedures by which decisions are made and priorities set in the University of Wisconsin System, or the manner in which such decisions and priorities are implemented with the University of Wisconsin System, insofar as such review is

not inconsistent with s. 36.09."

The latter portion of this action points in a direction that post-secondary institutions may go if they are to avoid losing much of their control over academic decision-making. An increasing number of states will probably require program evaluations. Therefore it is best if the institutions conduct their own program reviews which include performance and quality measures, then communicate the results to the responsible state committee. This approach would probably be preferred by the institutions over the suggestion by (Folger 1977) that "...the states specify the kind of objective evidence expected from colleges and universities about their program performance and about the quality of their programs....".

Management of Faculty Resources Within Colleges and Universities

A second impact of the FWL issue on postsecondary educational institutions may be the necessity to examine the productivity of faculty members to an extent that they have not before experienced. Cut-backs in appropriations, or increased appropriations that fall below the rate of inflation, will force attention toward management of resources and this will involve faculty productivity. Since 1972, faculty salaries have steadily fallen below the level of annual increases in inflation. This trend is likely to continue, consequently salary increases in the future may come at the expense of obtaining the needed number of faculty or by decreasing the number of faculty. This will increase FWL unless student enrollments decrease enough to compensate for fewer faculty.

The competition between schools or colleges, departments or disciplines within an institution will be keen. In order to provide an equitable distribution of scarce resources, some rational measures must be established for allocating FTE faculty to departments and for departmental faculty pro-

ductivity.

The Development of Expertise in Determining Faculty Workload

State encroachments on academic decision-making in the use of resources and the necessity for better management of resources within the college or university may result in another impact on postsecondary education in the 1980s. Institutions may be forced to give more attention to the development of expertise in determining faculty workload. Institutions will have to respond to whatever measures of productivity the state uses. These measures have generally been the use of credit hours taught, student credit hours per FTE faculty or student-faculty ratios. In most of the current formulas for budgeting that include a faculty workload factor, one of these measures is used along with student enrollments in determining appropriations for the numbers of faculty.

A response that institutions can make to legislative or executive committees is to challenge the use of the inadequate measures mentioned above for determining faculty workload. These committees may be unwilling to substitute more complex approaches for their previously-used simple ones. As Huther (1974) pointed out, "An extreme response is reflected in the remark of one legislative staff member that whatever he uses as background material on a topic must be distilled to be read in two minutes or less." Even if this attitude is encountered, institutions must strongly recommend that when workloads are an issue there must be sound methods used to determine them. This may be one of the challenges of the 1980s.

If institutions are to challenge state committees it will be necessary for institutional researchers and decision makers to become familiar (if they are not already) with the literature concerned with faculty workload, to experiment with different methods of calculating FWL and to choose the

best one.

One approach to such research or experimentation is to compare the results of the use of several different methods of calculating workloads across various disciplines and schools-colleges. Henard (1978) examined the use of five measures in this manner. The five measures were credit hours taught, faculty classroom contact hours, student credit hours generated (credit hours of course x number of students in the course), and two formulas developed by two universities. The results showed that the use of credit hours taught, faculty contact hours, or student credit hours are not reliable methods for computing faculty workloads. This is confirmed by comparing faculty members in a College of Engineering and a School of Education. For example, in the College of Engineering faculty workloads were compared by calculating the percent of the total college credit hours taught by each faculty member. Each faculty member's percent of the college's total faculty contact hours and total student credit hours (SCH) generated were also calculated. One faculty member ranked eighth in credit hours taught, tied for second on contact hours, and ranked third in SCH generated. In comparison, a second faculty member ranked first in credit hours taught, first in contact hours, and ninth in SCH generated.

This illustrates the inconsistencies that occur when one of the above measures is used to compare workloads in a single college. The problem is compounded when comparisons of workload are made across schools-colleges. The College of Engineering was compared to the School of Education. Because the School of Education has a larger graduate program, the proportion of thesis, independent study, and practicum credit hours and student credit hours is greater than those for the College of Engineering. Consequently, if these measures were used, the faculty in Education would show heavier

workloads.

The inconsistencies and inequities of these three measures (credit hours, contact hours, and SCH) of faculty workload have resulted in the development of faculty workload formulas. These formulas provide adjustment factors which weight different types of instructional activity (lecture, labs, etc.) and the levels (undergraduate, graduate) at which they occur. The adjustment factors are multiplied by the basic unit for a given instructional activity. For example, the basic unit for a lecture course is the credit hours of the course. The adjustment factor for undergraduate lecture courses may be 1.0 and for graduate courses it may be 1.5. The adjustment factors are multiplied by the credit hours of the course (undergrad lecture = 3 credit hours x 1.0 adjustment factor; graduate lecture = 3 credit hours x 1.5).

The faculty workload formulas developed by two universities were used to compute the workloads of faculty members in the College of Engineering and the School of Education. It was demonstrated that both formulas moved towards providing comparable workloads for varied types of academic activity and they compensated for variations in the input and output variables of credit hours taught, faculty contact hours, and student credit hours generated. However, because one workload formula was more effective in this regard than the other, more work is needed in ascribing acceptable weights to the various academic activities.

Both formulas include workload units for related instructional activity (student advising, committee and faculty meetings related to educational activities) and for related professional activity (university and community services, professional development, and scholarly activities).

Perhaps the formula approach for determining faculty workload is the

best one for institutions to use if they must confront this issue with legislative or executive committees. If institutions have researched the results when different methods are applied, and if they provide data to support their conclusions, and if the presentation is clear and simple, then it is possible that reasonable legislative and executive committees will listen.

Impacts on Academic Programming, Liberal Arts, and the Meaning of Education

Effects on academic programming. When state appropriations for faculty are based on the number of student credit hours (SCH) per FTE faculty or on student faculty ratios, it can be expected that an institution will concentrate on the production of student credit hours. This affects academic programming since institutions may be inclined to offer those courses and emphasize those degree programs that increase the number of student credit hours generated.

Effects on the liberal arts and the meaning of higher education. State appropriations for FTE faculty positions are ordinarily enrollment driven. The projections are that student enrollment in the subject areas of the liberal arts will decrease in the 1980s. The expected emphasis by the state on increasing faculty workload or productivity in order to decrease the number of FTE faculty allocations to institutions will have an additional deleterious effect on the liberal arts. This may force the liberal arts areas further into the role of providing a service function for professional programs. If this occurs, it will be increasingly difficult for institutions to maintain the historic emphasis on developing the educated person-citizen. A college or university education could be viewed increasingly as training for a profession or occupation.

Impacts of the Faculty Workload Issue on Faculties

Increase in the unionization of faculty. At this time it is unlikely

that the workload issue has played a major role in increased unionization of faculty. However, Mortimer and Lozier (1974) examined 92 collective bargaining contracts and discovered that sixty-nine had sepcific workload items dealing with teaching or course loads, usually in terms of credit hours per term or year or, in some cases, in terms of contact hours.

It is probable that in the future the faculty workload issue will play more of a role in unionization of faculty as state committees pursue program evaluations with the inclusion of faculty productivity related to costs, formula budgeting with faculty workload ingredients, performance budgeting, or performance audits. These actions will create the necessity for faculty to have a power base beyond a single institution. The power base can be provided by unions that are state-wide and nation-wide.

Effects on research and scholarly activity. State committees, when looking at workloads, are not generally sympathetic to the emphasis on research or scholarly activity. The institutions will have difficulty defending these activities. Goodwin (1970), Saupe (1972), and others have pointed out the difficulties of quantifying faculty activities other than those related to instruction. It may be necessary to defend some research and scholarly activity on the basis of their relationship to quality instruction.

The Psychological effects on educators and educational institutions. The faculty workload issue and related issues of program reviews, audits, and performance budgeting can have negative psychological effects on educators and postsecondary institutions. There can be a feeling of the loss of a valued place in society, a loss of esteem about the profession of education, and resentment of the apparent capricious actions of legislative committees whose members change with successive legislative sessions.

It may require a considerable amount of courage and character for

educators to avoid losing personal confidence and motivation because of the resultant feelings of powerlessness in such circumstances.

Educators and institutions can not be insulated from the difficulties and uncertainties to which other professions and organizations in society are subjected. However, as public servants responsible for education, it seems reasonable to expect that they should be treated with respect and consideration by other public servants in the legislative and executive branches of state government.

Summary and Conclusions

Most executive officers of state commissions-boards of higher education believe faculty workload will be an issue related to state appropriations in the 1980s. Trends toward including FWL in formula budgeting, audits, and program evaluations support their views.

The FWL issue may affect academic decision-making, unionization of faculties, scholarly research activities, the liberal arts, and other academic and faculty concerns. The impacts could prompt institutions to develop faculty workload formulas as a protection against the use of inadequate FWL measures by state committees.

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